

**STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD**

**5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN**

**FOR FISCAL YEARS 2019-2023**

## MISSISSIPPI VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD

### COMPREHENSIVE MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Mississippi State Veterans Affairs Board is to Honor Mississippi Veterans and their Dependents, through superior Service, Care, and Assistance.

### PHILOSOPHY:

The philosophy of the Mississippi Veterans Affairs Board is to be a responsive and resilient Agency; able to provide superior service to all Mississippi Veterans and their dependents.

### RELEVANT STATEWIDE GOALS AND BENCHMARKS

Statewide Goal #1: To develop a robust state economy that provides the opportunity for productive employment for all Mississippians

#### Relevant Benchmarks #1

- A report on the distribution of the Department of Veterans Affairs expenditures for FY 2016 shows over 1.75 billion dollars were spent on Mississippi Veterans. Nearly \$900 million was in compensation and pension payments to Veterans and dependents. Increasing the number of claims processed for Mississippi Veterans and decreasing the time it takes to process claims will result in a positive impact on the economy.
- The State Approving Agency division of the Veterans Affairs Board expects to increase the number of approved On the Job Training and Apprenticeship programs for Mississippi Veterans the next five years to increase the number of Veterans ready to enter the state's workforce.

Statewide Goal #2: To protect Mississippians from risks to public health and to provide the health – related information and access to quality healthcare necessary to increase the length and quality of their lives.

#### Relevant Benchmarks #2

- The Veterans Affairs Board operates four State Veterans Homes to care for elderly and ailing Veterans. The Veterans Affairs Board expects to maintain a 90% occupancy over the next five years or provide approximately 208,000 days of skilled nursing care.

### OVERVIEW OF THE AGENCY 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Mississippi Veterans Affairs Board has a few priorities for the next five years. Has constructed a second State Veterans Cemetery in operation in Kilmichael, MS. The cemetery was completed in August 2017. It will serve approximately 22,000 Veterans for burial in a National or State Cemetery within a 75 mile radius of Kilmichael, MS previously unserved.

The Mississippi Veterans Affairs Board is continually assessing the needs of the Veterans of the state of Mississippi and to get services closer to our Veteran ( cemetery, nursing home, claims and Education), and to assure that existing services is not depleting or diminishing.

The Agency is implementing Electronic Medical Record system that is expected to be in full operation by spring 2018. The system will be compatible with the Department of Veterans Affairs that will allow seamless medical information sharing/transfer.

The Mississippi Veterans Affairs Board will continue to search for new and better ways to serve Mississippi's Veterans.

#### **AGENCY'S EXTERNAL/INTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

- 1) Unstable and unpredictable state funding and appropriations.
- 2) Delay in filling vacancies created by departure of Veterans Service Officers will reduce the Claims Division's ability to perform its mission.
- 3) A significant decrease in funding would impair the State Approving Agency's ability to Perform its mission. The State Approving Agency is reliant upon federal funding to The state for salaries, travel and administrative expense.
- 4) Increased cost in medical care could impact the goal of providing care at or below the cost In the private sector.
- 5) Changes in the makeup of population served by our Nursing Homes Division could affect our ability to maintain a 90% occupancy rate.
- 6) Changes in state and federal regulations could severely impact program goals.
- 7) Passage of Senate Bill 2362 and result of funding reductions continues to exacerbate on going decline in responsiveness and service from state supported agencies; adversely affecting agency operations.

The Veterans Affairs Board's internal control plan which is reviewed twice annually. The Veterans Affairs Board also has established and implemented a long range strategic plan to guide the direction of the agency. The strategic planning committee members meet regularly to determine if goals and objectives for assisting, serving and caring for out Mississippi Veterans are being met.

The **Claims Division** utilizes the State of Mississippi Performance Development Assessment System to evaluate the performance of all Claims Division employees. Job related factors will be considered with each employee being evaluated annually, and by the number of claims processed and communications.

The **State Approving Agency** follows the policies and procedures as set forth in the code of the Federal Regulations 38, part 18 to end and other Supplementary Regulations published by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The requests for approval are entered on a log showing the date of receipt. Inspections and supervisory visits are entered on a log showing the date of visits and when VA conducts a compliance survey and discrepancies involving the State Approving Agency for action, the date of the DAV letter is logged along with the date corrective action is initiated by State Approving Agency and any follow up inspection that might be required by the State Approving Agency.

The **Nursing Home Division** follows the policies and procedures as set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 38, Part 0 to 17, and supplementary regulations published by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the State Department of Health and also the Veterans Affairs Board policies and procedures. The State Department of Health inspection and Department of Veterans Affairs inspection reports will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of care provided and to insure that any noted discrepancies are corrected. The Veterans Affairs Board uses a rating system to monitor the efficiency of the home's operations. Log books will be used to track application process. The occupancy rate (number of beds filled divided by the number of beds available) will be maintained at 90%. To insure this, we will use different modes of advertisement and close contact with local veterans' groups.

The **Cemetery Division** will be maintained to the national shrine standards.

The Veterans Affairs Board has developed a comprehensive technology strategy and Architecture that will enable effective disaster recovery and ensure continuity of agency wide operation.

**AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND MEASURES BY PROGRAM FOR FY 2016 THROUGH FY 2020:**

**Program 1: Claims Division**

**GOAL A: Improve continuity of service to Veterans**

**OBJECTIVE A. 1.** Increase the number of Veterans claims processed.

Outcome: More Veterans receiving the benefits they deserve.

**A.1.1 STRATEGY:** The Mississippi Veterans Affairs Board is hiring additional State Veterans Service Officers and placing them strategically throughout the state. The goal is to have a State Veterans Service Officer within fifty miles of every veteran in the state. The first Veterans Service Officer was hired July, 2015, with five in place to date.

Output: Number of claims processed

Efficiency: Average caseload per State Veterans Service Officer

**OBJECTIVE A.2.** Increase the number of Fully Developed Claims.

Outcome: Reduce the time it takes from when a claim is submitted until the claim is decided.

**A.1.2 STRATEGY:** The State Veterans Service Officers will recognize when completing a fully developed claim is appropriate, complete the claim and submit to the VA.

Output: Number of fully developed claims processed  
Efficiency: Average length of time for Veteran to receive decision reduced.

**A.1.3. STRATEGY:** Claims Division is working with federal VA to reduce approvals back log and inventory.

Output:  
Efficiency:

**Program 2: State Approving Agency:**

**GOAL A:**

**OBJECTIVE A.1 Increase the number of approved (for VA funding) On the Job Training and Apprenticeship programs in Mississippi**

Outcome: Increase the number of Veterans ready to enter the work force.

**A.1.1 STRATEGY:** Increase marketing efforts by attending job fairs, education fairs, etc.

Output: Number of Veterans trained.  
Efficiency: Maximize federal funding.

**Program 3: Nursing Home Division**

**GOAL A: Increase the number of service choices for Veterans**

**OBJECTIVE A.1. Explore new long term care options for Veterans**

Outcome: To provide increased options for Mississippi Veterans requiring long term care.

**A.1.1 STRATEGY:** The Mississippi Veterans Affairs Board staff will work with the Department of Veterans Affairs in an effort to identify new long term options needed to care for Mississippi Veterans.

Output: Number of elderly Veterans in need of long term care.

Efficiencies: Compare cost of skilled nursing care to other possible options.

**GOAL B: Stabilize funding**

**OBJECTIVE A.1. Pursue Revenue Sources**

Outcome: Increase the Agency's revenue stream to help fund needed services for Mississippi Veterans.

**A.1.1. STRATEGY:** Increase Medicare Part B funding for State Veterans Homes.

Output: Amount of Medicare reimbursement received.  
Efficiency: Average time it takes to file claims.

**A.1.2. STRATEGY:** Increase admissions of Veterans that qualify for the higher per diem rate paid by the VA to State Veterans Homes.

Output: Days of care provided to Veterans eligible for the VA prevailing rate.  
Efficiency: Average daily cost of care compared to VA prevailing rate.

**A.1.3. STRATEGY:** Transition nursing homes to private rooms and self-funding.

Output:  
Efficiency:

**Program 4: Cemetery Division**

**GOAL A: Exploit emerging/changing opportunities to provide more, new and improved services.**

**OBJECTIVE A.1. Complete closeout of Cemetery construction/ funding.**

Outcome: Provide increased burial options for Veterans and spouses.

**A.1.1 STRATEGY:** Complete all required documents as required to closeout Cemetery project and recoup funding /expenditures.

Output: Average number of burials annually.  
Efficiency: Cost to operate new Cemetery.